

Girls, trauma, and the institutional maze: The challenges of navigating institutional control

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It is well documented that the majority of girls involved in the juvenile justice system have experienced some form of trauma (Chesney-Lind 1999; Simkins, Hirsch, McNamara Horvat, and Moss 2004; Morris 2016; Belknap & Holsinger 2006). This paper comes out of a five-year qualitative study examining youth punishment in Hawai'i at a high school and various programs within the juvenile justice system on O'ahu. This paper focuses on the challenges girls experienced with navigating institutional control in Hawai'i. Girls in my study had similar demographics, yet a range of experiences with trauma and engagement with support services. I found that girls who had strong social support networks had more resiliency, an increase of engagement with programs, and were able to find their way out of the "institutional maze". I argue that an expanded definition of trauma combined with strong networks of social support and services that incorporate appropriate cultural models can impact girls ability to engage in institutional programs that encourage desistance to delinquency.

Biography

Sanna King Ph.D. received her Doctorate in Sociology from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA, with a focus on feminist criminology, colonial criminology, and social stratification-specifically juvenile justice, incarceration, re-entry, school violence and punishment, police misconduct, deviance, and social control. Her M.A. from Columbia University is in American Studies, which followed her B.A. in Ethnic Studies from University of California, San Diego. Her training includes youth development and therapeutic curriculums, crisis intervention and mediation, domestic violence, focused curriculum development and facilitation, among several others. She also has trained in working with incarcerated youth from intake and case management to discharge planning, reentry preparation, program development and planning, and best practices research. She has taught various undergraduate criminology and social stratification courses in the Sociology Department at University of Hawai'i and in the Criminal Justice Department at San Diego State University. Her position as Assistant Professor of Sociology at Mississippi State University begins in the Fall of 2019. Her career, research and study have been focused on at-risk youth. In addition to teaching at multiple universities, she also introduced writing workshops to incarcerated youth at Riker's Island Correctional Facility in New York for several years before moving to Hawai'i. In Hawai'i she continued working with incarcerated and at-risk youth through facilitating writing workshops and therapeutic group-counseling programs using the girls circle curriculum at juvenile detention facilities and a high school on O'ahu, Hawai'i.

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